

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 01683 302244Z

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SIL-01 LAB-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /103 W

----- 118704

R 302215Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4029

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 1683

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT NU

SUBJECT: GENERAL SOMOZA EXPLAINS GON POSITION ON MEDIA CENSORSHIP

REF: MANAGUA 1617

1. GENERAL SOMOZA TOLD THE AMBASSADOR APRIL 27 THAT GON IMPOSED MEDIA CENSORSHIP WITH GREATEST RELUCTANCE AFTER NATIONAL GOVERNING COUNCIL AND CABINET CONCLUDED THAT ALTERNATIVE MIGHT BE EVEN MORE UNDESIRABLE USE OF FORCE TO SUPPRESS VIOLENCE AND LIKELY BLOODSHED. SOMOZA EXPLAINED THAT GON BECAME INCREASINGLY ALARMED THAT HOSPITAL STRIKERS WERE RECEIVING CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM FOREIGN SOURCES AND WERE BECOMING MORE DEEPLY ASSOCIATED WITH COMMUNIST DOMINATED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS UNION (SCAAS). GON ALSO HABBED SERIOUS MISGIVINGS ABOUT STRIKERS INVOLVEMENT WITH SOCIAL CHRISTIANS (PCS) AND LIBERAL CATHOLIC INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (INPRHU) WHICH IT DEEPLY MISTRUSTS. IN GON VIEW, BARRAGE OF INFLAMMATORY ARTICLES APPEARING IN OPPOSITION LA PRENSA AND DOME RADIO BROADCASTS WERE FEEDING FLAMES OF AN INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS SITUATION AND IT HAD TO ACT TO SNUFF THEM OUT. GON THEREFORE BIT THE BULLET AND
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PAGE 02 MANAGU 01683 302244Z

ISSUED

CENSORSHIP DECREE WHICH, ACCORDING TO SOMOZA, IT INTENDS TO RESCIND AS
SOON AS STRIKE ENDS.

2. COMMENT: ON BASIS OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY, WHICH WAS
REPORTED IN NUMEROUS TELEGRAMS ON THE STRIKES (MANAGUA 1618 AND
PREVIOUS) WE DID NOT ASSESS SITUATION AS BEING AS HAZARDOUS AS GON
APPARENTLY CONSIDERED IT TO BE. HOWEVER, GON MAY HAVE INFORMATION
WHICH WE DO NOT POSSES. IN ADDITION, WE UNDERSTANDABLY TAKE A MORE
DETACHED VIEW OF SOME OF THE CHARACTERS AND FORCES INVOLVED THAN
THE GON, WHICH APPARENTLY PERCEIVES THEM AS VERY OMINOUS AND
THREATENING TO ITS POSITION. NEVERTHE-
LESS WE CAN AGREE THAT IF GON DID PERCEIVE A SERIOUS THREAT TO
STABILITY IT WAS PROBABLY CORRECT IN CHOOSING CENSORSHIP OVER EVEN
MORE REPRESSIVE AND OBJECTIONABLE MEASURES.
SHELTON

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